

BOROUGH



OF NELSON.

NELSON,
28TH JANUARY, 1898.

To the

Chairman and Members of the Health Committee.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present you my Annual Report on the health and sanitary condition of the Borough. I shall adhere to the plan I have hitherto adopted in my reports and give you the formal record of the births and deaths which occurred in the borough during the year. I find 876 births (455 males, 421 females) were registered, which gives an annual birth-rate of 27·3 per 1,000. The deaths registered (including premature births and inquest cases) numbered 452 (237 males, 215 females), which gives an annual death-rate of 14·1 per 1,000. If we exclude premature births (30) and inquest cases (13) it gives a rate of 12·7 per 1,000.

The deaths of children under one year (including premature births) totalled 152, giving a death-rate of 17·3 per cent. calculated on the number born during the year.

The following table epitomises the ages at which the deaths occurred:—

Deaths under 1 year	152	231 deaths under 5 years.
„ of 1 year and under 5 years	...	...	...	...	...	...	79
„ of 5 years	„	15	„	26	221 over 5 years.
„ of 15	„	25	„	...	...	...	27
„ of 25	„	65	„	...	...	...	100
„ of 65	„	and over	...	...	...	...	68

I enclose a detailed list of the causes of death and the ages at which they died.

Under the “Notification of Infectious Diseases Act” there have been reported 115 cases of Scarlet Fever, 22 of Enteric Fever, 1 Relapsing Fever, and 19 of Diphtheria. In these cases the Health Superintendent took the requisite steps to prevent their spread, notifying not only the parents but also the School Authorities—thus efficiently prohibiting any children from infected houses attending school—supplying disinfectants, attending to the drains, ashpits, &c.

I mentioned in my Annual Report for 1896 that we were free of any epidemic until December, when measles appeared. This epidemic developed into so severe and fatal a type that no less than 54 deaths were recorded during the first quarter of the year from measles and its complications. This accounts for the high rate of 21·5 for that quarter. We had an exceedingly cold east wind nearly all the quarter, to which the chest complications were mainly attributable. About 90 per cent. of the deaths were complicated with bronchitis, pneumonia, or both (broncho-pneumonia).

I pointed out in my Report for the March quarter, and I repeat it, that the majority of parents think all they have to do in a case of measles is to keep the child warm and get perspiration freely established and all will be right in a day or two, but unfortunately when that is done they relax their care, and the little one is exposed to cold, which brings on some fatal complication. The teachers in the different schools were advised to be very careful (when any one was absent) in ascertaining the cause, and if that cause were measles not to admit any from that house, but it was found necessary to close the schools, which was done for a fortnight. Several of the Sunday Schools were also closed. The epidemic was pretty well got over in the first quarter, as we had only one death in the second quarter. The death-rates for the several quarters were:—1st quarter, 21·5; 2nd quarter, 13·3; 3rd quarter, 9·6; 4th quarter, 12.

The deplorable condition of Maidstone during the year will doubtless have awakened the most apathetic Sanitary Authority to its duties in regard to water supply, and I feel sure the inhabitants of Nelson and the districts supplied with water by you will be pleased to learn you are having periodical analyses by the County Analyst of the water supplied, thus ensuring a pure and wholesome article.

1897 has been a very busy year in many of the Corporation departments, and through the kindness of Mr. Ball (Borough Surveyor) I am able to say that plans have been passed for 695 buildings, 50 per cent. in excess of the average of the previous five years. 61 streets have been paved at a cost of about £12,000, and this is now done in a more substantial manner than formerly, and which will lessen the cost of after repairs. The Sewage disposal works are practically completed, and the effluent therefrom equals in appearance town's water. Several storm overflows have been constructed, and a scheme of main intercepting sewers is now before the Local Government Board.

One wing of the Victoria Park extension was opened in November last, and the works in the other portion are being carried out as quickly as weather will permit.

The Sanitary department has also been doing good work. Mr. Priestley (Health Superintendent) has enabled me to give you, in a brief space, some idea of what has been done:—

NUISANCES.—283 complaints have been investigated, and steps taken for their abatement.

NOTICES—A large number of miscellaneous nuisances have been remedied without the service of statutory notice, the following have been reported and notices served to carry out the necessary works:—

- 17 Privies to convert into W.Cs.
- 24 Ashpits to furnish proper doors and coverings.
- 3 To provide suitable ashpits.
- 3 To provide suitable manure middens.
- 10 W.Cs. blocked.
- 20 To provide new drains.
- 3 Cases of pig keeping.
- 15 Burning rubbish.
- 1 Mill to provide separate W.C. accommodation.
- 5 Sundries.

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Legal proceedings have also been necessary in two cases to secure the abatement of nuisances, and orders, with costs, have been secured in each case.

Five cases of unsound meat have been reported during the year. $1\frac{1}{2}$ carcasses of pigs, $1\frac{1}{2}$ carcasses of cows and the carcasses of a sheep and lamb have been seized and destroyed as unfit for food. Legal proceedings have been taken in two cases, and a fine of £10 in one and £5 in the other has been imposed.

One new slaughter-house has been licensed during the year, and the whole (20) have been fairly well conducted. The common lodging-house at Clough Bottom continues to be kept in a satisfactory manner.


No new offensive trades have been established. Scavenging has been efficiently carried out by the Corporation staff: the ashes deposited at tips and the Market and Butchers' refuse burnt at the refuse destructor. Plans have been adopted and borrowing powers applied for (£7,000) to erect a new refuse destructor capable of dealing with the whole of the town's refuse, the present one being inadequate. The provisions of the Dairies and Cow Sheds Act have been fairly well observed.

The temporary Smallpox Hospital has been kept ready for any emergency under the care of a resident nurse, but I am glad to say no case has occurred during the year. Thorough disinfection of clothing and bedding after infectious cases is impossible, as we have no proper station or apparatus. In my report for 1896 I brought this matter before you, gentlemen, but so far no provision has been made.

I have the honour to remain, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. P. MILLAR, M.D.



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NELSON CORPORATION.

1897.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

ANNUAL

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.



A. P. MILLAR, M.D.,
NELSON.